MARVEL

29

AVX VS

BENDIS
SIMONSON
HANNA
KEITH

THE AVENGERS

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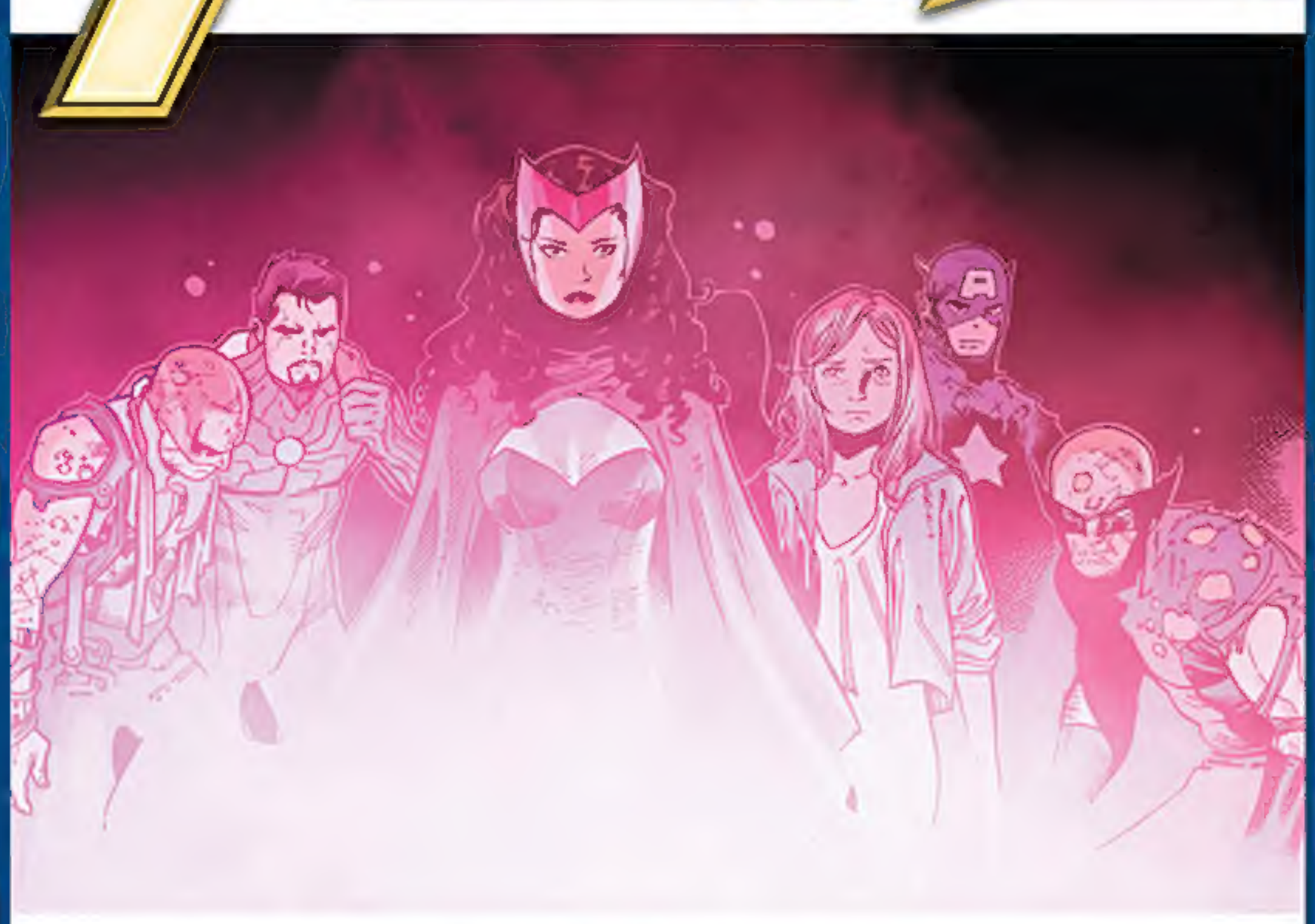
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES, UNITED AGAINST A COMMON THREAT! ON THAT DAY THE AVENGERS WERE BORN, TO FIGHT FOES THAT NO SINGLE HERO COULD WITHSTAND!

THE AVENGERS



WOLVERINE

IRON MAN

HAWKEYE

WAR MACHINE

CAPTAIN AMERICA

SPIDER-WOMAN

BLACK PANTHER

THOR

PREVIOUSLY:

THE PHOENIX FORCE HAS ARRIVED, IMBUING FIVE OF THE MOST ICONIC MUTANTS—CYCLOPS, EMMA FROST, NAMOR, COLOSSUS AND MAGIK—WITH WORLD-ALTERING POWERS.

THE AVENGERS WISH TO NEUTRALIZE THE COSMIC FORCE, BUT ARE PUT IN A PRECARIOUS SITUATION AS THE MUTANTS HAVE THUS FAR BEEN USING THEIR POWERS FOR HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS ACROSS THE GLOBE. THOUGH THE AVENGERS COUNT SOME OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST STRATEGISTS AMONGST THEIR NUMBERS, THE X-MEN HAVE REMAINED ONE STEP AHEAD OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES.

NOTE: THIS STORY TAKES PLACE CONCURRENT WITH THE EVENTS OF *WOLVERINE AND THE X-MEN #12* AND BEFORE THE EVENTS OF *AVX #8*

BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS
WRITER

WALTER SIMONSON
PENCILS

SCOTT HANNA
INKS

JASON KEITH
COLORS

VC'S CORY PETIT
LETTERS

JOHN DENNING & JAKE THOMAS
ASSISTANT EDITORS

LAUREN SANKOVITCH
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

TOM BREVOORT
EDITOR

AXEL ALONSO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

DAN BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

ALAN FINE
EXEC. PRODUCER

MIKE DEODATO & RAIN BEREDO COVER ART

SPECIAL THANKS TO JASON AARON

WAKANDA.

ONE OF THE BIG REASONS THE X-MEN BEAT US AT EVERY TURN IS THAT THEY KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING TO TURN BEFORE *WE* DO.

YEAH?

SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT I JUST HAD TO SAY WHAT'S ON MY--

YOU'RE NOT INTERRUPTING, SPIDER-WOMAN.

IF WE *HAD* SOMETHING RESEMBLING A PLAN YOU'D BE INTERRUPTING. BUT WE HAVE NOTHING.

WE'RE BRAINSTORMING.

I KNOW THIS SOUNDS PARANOID, BUT HEAR ME OUT.

WE CAN'T WIN THIS FIGHT THE WAY IT'S BEING FOUGHT.

AND NOT BECAUSE OF THE PHOENIX FORCE, EVEN THOUGH, SURE, YEAH, COSMIC DESTRUCTIVE FORCE...

BUT WE CAN'T WIN THE GROUND FIGHT AGAINST THE X-MEN BECAUSE THEY HAVE TELEPATHS AND WE DON'T.

NOW, SOME OF YOU KNOW, BEFORE I WAS AN AVENGER I WAS AN AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D....

AND BEFORE THAT I WAS AN AGENT OF HYDRA...

AND I HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF ENOUGH PSYCHIC MANIPULATION TO KNOW THAT ALL THEY NEED TO WIN IS PSYCHIC MANIPULATION.

SO, LET'S SAY THIS:

WHATEVER THIS PLAN YOU'RE COOKING UP IS, I RECOMMEND DOING A NICK FURY FIRST.
A NICK FURY?
MOAN ABOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS?
I RECOMMEND GOING FOR THE TELEPATHS FIRST.
WHO *ARE* THE BIG TELEPATHS ON THE X-MEN?
HOLD ON, I'LL PULL UP THE INTEL...
EMMA FROST AND RACHEL SUMMERS.
YES, OKAY. *THOSE* SHOULD BE OUR PRIMARY TARGETS.
WE WON'T GET ANYWHERE *NEAR* SCOTT SUMMERS WITH *THOSE* TWO ON THE BOARD.
I DON'T DISAGREE
I THINK WE'RE A LITTLE PAST GETTING NEAR EMMA FROST.
TELL ME ABOUT IT!
I ASKED HER OUT FOUR TIMES OVER THE YEARS AND SHE SHOT ME DOWN *EVERY TIME.*
AND THAT WAS *BEFORE* SHE WAS A PHOENIX.
THAT'S BECAUSE SHE COULD READ YOUR MIND, SWEETIE.
IF I COULD READ YOUR MIND I WOULDN'T GO ANYWHERE NEAR YOU EITHER.
YOU HAVE *NO IDEA* HOW TRUE THAT IS.
I CAN DRAW OUT RACHEL.
WAIT.
DAMN.
I'VE ALREADY RUINED THE SCORE.
HOW SO?

BECAUSE NOW IF YOU GET *NEAR* SUMMERS SHE WILL READ YOUR MIND AND KNOW THAT *SHE* IS A TARGET.

SO NOW *WE* NEED A TELEPATH.

THERE'S 400 AVENGERS TEAMS... DO WE *HAVE* A TELEPATH?

A TELEPATH BETTER THAN THEIR TELEPATHS.

AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?

MOONDRAGON.

UH, ANYONE ELSE?

WHY, WHAT'S WRONG WITH *HER?*

ANYONE ELSE?

HER TOO?

YOU'RE SUCH A PIG.

LIKE YOU'RE A NUN.

ALL THE BEST ONES ARE MUTANTS.

WE WON'T BE ABLE TO TRUST THEM.

I CAN MAKE A CALL.

HE CAN MAKE A CALL.

INDONESIA, CHAPARANGA BEACH.
THE SPACESHIP GRAVEYARD.

SHE'S CLOSE.

I KNOW.

SHE WILL ALREADY BE ATTEMPTING TO READ YOUR THOUGHTS.

YUP.

I KNOW HOW THIS WORKS.

SHE WILL FEEL THAT SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT.

SHE WILL ASSUME THAT HENRY MCCOY IS ATTEMPTING TO USE PSYCHIC SHIELDS AGAINST HER.

LIKE I SAID, BUB, I KNOW HOW THIS WORKS.

LONG WAY TO GO FOR A TRAP.

IT ONLY WORKS IF SHE THINKS LOGAN'S ON THE LAM, WAR MACHINE.

I KNOW HOW IT WORKS.

IT'S STILL A LONG WAY TO GO.

SHH.

I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU RESPECT HER.

LET'S JUST GET THIS OVER WITH.

SHE'S HERE.

THE LAST ASTRONAUT

NICE *PSI-SHIELDING*, LOGAN.

I SEE HENRY HAS MADE SOME IMPROVEMENTS TO HIS DESIGN.

NOW?

NOT YET. SOMETHING IS WRONG.

NOT YET, PIETRO.

JUST TELL ME WHERE YOU'RE HIDING *HOPE*.

DON'T MAKE THIS ANY HARDER THAN IT HAS TO BE.

HARDER THAN IT HAS TO BE?

YOU FORGET WHO THE HELL YOU'RE *TALKIN'* TO?

OH GOD.

NOW?

WAIT, SHE'S NOT ALONE.

NOW.

IT'S NOT YOUR TRAP... IT'S HERS.

YEAH, I JUST CAUGHT THAT.

YOU'VE LOST YOUR WAY IN THIS FIGHT, LOGAN.

YOU'RE LETTING YOUR PERSONAL RESENTMENT OF CYCLOPS CLOUD YOUR *JUDGMENT.*

THE PHOENIX IS HERE TO *SAVE* US. TO MAKE CERTAIN THE FUTURE I CAME FROM NEVER COMES TO BE.

WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO STAND IN THE WAY OF TRUE UTOPIA?

THIS WAS A *MISTAKE.*

TOO LATE.

THE PHOENIX AIN'T ON OUR SIDE, DARLIN'.

IT'S ON ITS *OWN.*

AND YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S LOST THEIR DAMNED WAY.

I'M JUST GLAD YOUR *MOMMA* AIN'T HERE TO SEE THIS.

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

DID YOU THINK--?!

FAWHAM

NAMOR HAS THE POWER OF THE PHOENIX FORCE.

YOU CANNOT BEAT HIM.

HOW DID YOU NOT FEEL HIM BEFORE I SAW HIM?

RACHEL WAS BLOCKING HIM FROM ME.

SHE IS VERY ADEPT.

I TOLD YOU.

DO NOT TAKE HER LIGHTLY.

TREAT HER AS YOU WOULD ME.

THEY ARE HERE TO WIN.

HENRY... YOU'RE ONE OF MY OLDEST FRIENDS IN THE WORLD. I'M NOT GOING TO FIGHT YOU.

WELL, THIS GOT UGLY FAST.

AS I FEARED IT WOULD.

WE SHOULD GET THESE PEOPLE OUT OF--

WHOOSH

DEAR LORD, I'M SO SORRY.

IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT.

YOU SAVED US.

CAN WE GET ON WITH THIS?

WAIT!

THOR'S GOT HER ON THE ROPES.

IF GOD BOY SCORES A TAKEDOWN WE MAY NOT HAVE TO GO THROUGH WITH THE WHOLE...

THOR WOULD RATHER FIGHT WOMEN THAN FACE THE KING OF ATLANTIS!

WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

IMPERIUS REX!

SCRATCH THAT.

IT'S NOW OR NEVER, BIG BRAIN.

KEEP THE OTHERS OCCUPIED.

I HAVE HER.

THIS WAY, HOPE. WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE.

DAMMIT, NO! I'M NOT LEAVING. I'M TIRED OF RUNNING AND HIDING.

THIS IS MY FIGHT.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

IT IS YOUR FIGHT.

FZZKT

I'M YOUR SISTER, HOPE.

MY SISTER?

AS A MUTANT, A FIGHTER AND OUR MUTUAL HISTORY WITH THE PHOENIX.

CAN I BORROW YOUR HAIRBRUSH?

JUST COME WITH ME AND--

WHAT ARE YOU--?

WAIT.

THIS ISN'T-- SOMETHING'S NOT--

OH NO...

THIS ISN'T REAL.

YOU'VE REALLY IMPROVED, RACHEL.

YOU.

YOU HAVE GROWN SUBSTANTIALLY AS A TELEPATH.

I COULD NOT BE MORE PROUD OF YOU.

PROFESSOR X!

I AM SORRY WE ARE MEETING AGAIN UNDER SUCH... DISTRESSING CIRCUMSTANCES.

BUT CLEARLY, THIS NEEDS TO STOP.

YOU'RE-- YOU'RE WORKING WITH *THEM?*

YOU'RE ON *WOLVERINE'S SIDE?*

KEEP THE FIGHT *HERE!*

YOU HEARD THE MAN!

YOU'RE MAD! YOU'RE *ALL* MAD!

I'M ON THE SIDE I HAVE *ALWAYS* BEEN ON.

I'M ON *HUMANITY'S* SIDE.

I'M ON THE SIDE OF WHAT'S BEST FOR THE *MUTANT* RACE.

WE'RE *YOUR* STUDENTS! WE'RE *X-MEN.*

SCOTT SUMMERS *IS LIKE A SON TO YOU!*

IT IS A TRAP!

NAMOR! RUN!

SUMMERS!

GO, NAMOR!

GO!

BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE HIM *RIGHT.*

PLEASE, RACHEL, THINK OF THE BIG PICTURE. THINK OF TOMORROW.

I DON'T WANT TO OVERPOWER YOU.

I DO *NOT* WANT TO HURT YOU.

YOU'RE-- YOU'RE HERE FOR *ME.*

THIS WAS ALL JUST TO GET ME OFF THE GRID.

YES.

YOU *SHOULD* BE FLATTERED.

YOU'RE A TRAITOR TO YOUR OWN PEOPLE!

NO!!

SLEEP.

I CAN'T DO IT.

WHAT CAN'T YOU DO?

JESSICA DREW, HOW ARE YOU STILL AWAKE?

PSYCHIC SHIELDS.

PRETTY GOOD ONES.

HAD THEM IMPLANTED WHEN I WAS AN AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

WE'RE SO CLOSE TO SHUTTING THIS DOWN.

WHAT *CAN'T* YOU DO?

I CAN'T RAISE MY HAND TO MY STUDENTS.

I CAN'T BE PART OF THIS.

I CAN'T FIGHT THIS FIGHT.

I WAS WRONG TO COME HERE.

THAT'S NOT TRUE. WE *NEED* YOU.

THEY--*THEY* NEED YOU.

THEY NEED HELP GETTING OUT FROM UNDER THIS PHOENIX INFLUENCE...

THEY ARE GROWN MEN AND WOMEN.

THEY HAVE MADE THEIR CHOICES.

WAIT, NO, I'M NOT SAYING THIS--THIS IS NOT YOUR FAULT, PROFESSOR.

YOU'RE RIGHT. THEY *ARE* GROWN MEN AND WOMEN.

BUT WE NEED YOU TO *SHUT THEM DOWN.*

WE-- THEY--WE NEED HELP.

I DON'T HAVE THE TASTE FOR MADNESS AND BLOOD THE REST OF YOU DO.

CAPTAIN AMERICA, WAKE UP. I WANT YOU TO HEAR THIS.

YOU DON'T AGH--!

CAPTAIN, I WAS NEVER HERE.

NEITHER SIDE WILL REMEMBER ME EVER BEING HERE.

THE BATTLE WILL PLAY OUT OF ITS OWN ACCORD.

PLEASE DO NOT CALL ME AGAIN.

NO! CHARLES, LISTEN, THIS IS WHERE WE NEED YOU THE MOS--

SLEEP.

DREAM.

CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY.

I HAD A DREAM.

AND IT'S ALL BUT DEAD.

AVX

NEXT:

IN THE TRENCHES!

THE TASKMASTER AT HAND!

OOO THAT VOODOO, THAT YOU DO...!

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